

# Asbestos

## **What are possible sources of Asbestos in my home?**

Asbestos is a mineral fiber that has been used in many building materials as a fire retardant and insulator. The most common places to find asbestos is in older homes where it was used in pipe and furnace insulation, shingles, coating materials, and floor tiles. When these materials are damaged or get too old, the material may break down and some of the asbestos may be released into the air. This can present a problem, especially if it is inside of your dwelling.

## **What are the health effects of exposure to asbestos?**

There are virtually no immediate symptoms from being exposed to asbestos. The problem is generally from long-term exposure, and usually takes years to show up. Asbestosis, and other lung diseases, including chest and abdominal cancers, can result. Those who have other lung conditions, and those who smoke, have a greater chance of getting these diseases.

## **How can I reduce the chances of exposure to asbestos in my dwelling?**

There are several steps you can take to minimize risks of exposure:

- Leave undamaged asbestos material alone. Only asbestos materials that are deteriorating or are likely to be disturbed should be addressed.
- If the material must be removed or disturbed, use qualified contractors for control measures and clean up.
- Do not cut, rip, or sand materials that contain asbestos.
- If you need to discard some asbestos containing materials, contact the health department or local town officials to find out about proper handling and disposal. Some Towns have "STOP" (Stop Throwing Out Pollutants) programs, which accept these materials. Contact your town offices to inquire about STOP program requirements and schedules.

## **Is more information available?**

You can visit the following web site(s) for more information:

US Environmental Protection Agency  
([www.epa.gov/iaq/asbestos.html](http://www.epa.gov/iaq/asbestos.html)) and ([www.epa.gov/asbestos/ashome.html](http://www.epa.gov/asbestos/ashome.html))

American Lung Association  
(<http://www.lungusa.org/site/pp.asp?c=dvLUK9O0E&b=35368>)

Nassau County residents have additional questions or concerns regarding Asbestos in their dwelling can call the NC Department of Health – Residential Environment Unit (516-227-9686).